

Changing the Path of Social Emotional Health for Infants, Toddlers and Their Families



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Objectives

- Discuss typical child development
- Review the impact of maltreatment and toxic stress on infant and toddler development
- Share practices that support healthy infant and toddler development
- Emphasize the principle that families are at the center of our work with a child

Early experiences matter.....

A child's "wiring" for emotional capacities is established, during the first few years, through his or her experiences with relationships. These emotional capacities have strong links with later behavior.



Typical Child Development

Five domains of development

- Physical/Motor
- Cognition
- Communication
- Adaptive
- Social/emotional



Development happens within the context of a relationship

- Infant/Caregiver relationship
- Attachment
- Learning to trust
- Dependency, independency and interdependency
- Play is a child's work



Factors Influencing Child Development



Impact of Trauma on Infants and Toddlers

Before



•birth (congenital)



infant/caregiver relationships)

Impact of Trauma on Infant and Toddlers

Congenital examples

- Fetal-alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Babies born addicted/exposed to drugs
- Other genetic disorders

Cause

- Failure to Thrive
- Attachment Disorder
- Difficulty making all necessary natural connections
- Difficulty learning development to full potential



Impact of Trauma on Infant and Toddlers

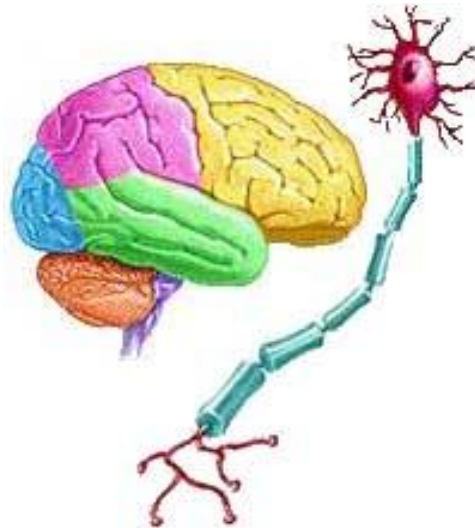
Infant/Caregiver Relationship Disrupted by:

- Child illness/maternal depression
- Multiple out-of-home placements
- Exposure to chronic maltreatment (violence/abuse)
- Irregular daily routines
- Story of Sarah



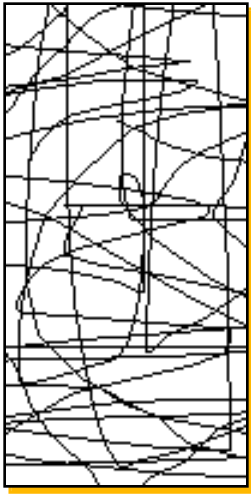
What is happening in the Brain?

- Genes are responsible for wiring and general connections
- Experiences are responsible for fine-tuning the connections



What's Happening in the Brain?

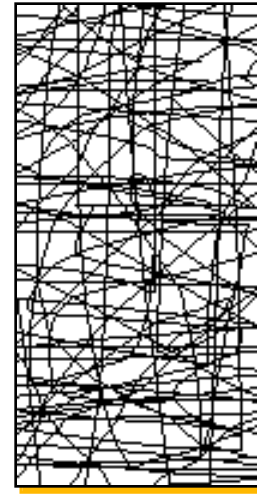
Pruning



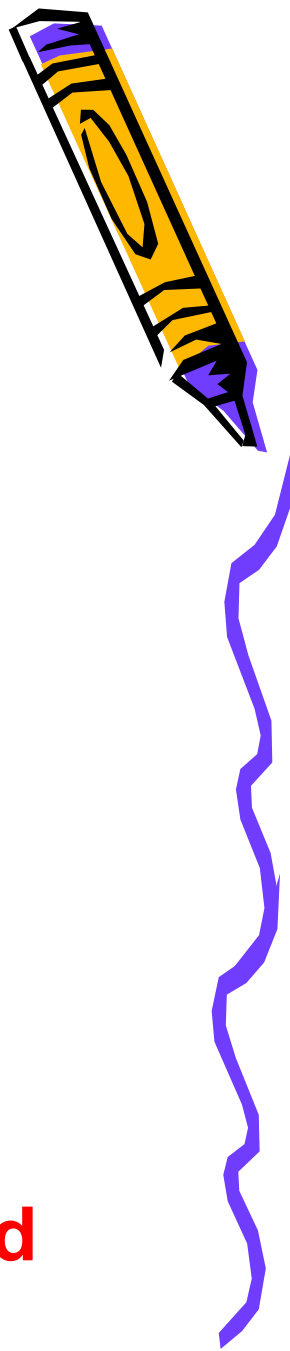
Newborn



Early
Childhood



Later
Childhood



Impact of Trauma on Infants, Toddlers and Families

- Many babies are exposed simultaneously to congenital and social-emotional traumas
- Intergenerational cycle of trauma than needs comprehensive intervention strategies



So what can we do?

What does the research tell us?

- Prevention and early treatment are critical strategies for protecting at-risk babies and their families
- Home visitation is highly effective in preventing child abuse and neglect
- Infants and toddlers have specific needs that must be address by the child welfare system



So what can we do?

What does the research tell us?

- Federal and state policy support early identification, screening and evaluation of emotional development
- In the philosophy of concurrent planning, the first placement should be looked at as the potential life long placement
- The best predictor of reunification is frequency of visits



Adults Vs. Children

- When I look at a patch of dandelions, I see a bunch of weeds that are going to take over my yard.
- My kids see flowers for Mom and blowing white fluff you can wish on.
- When I look at an old drunk and he smiles at me, I see a smelly, dirty person who probably wants money and I look away.
- My kids see someone smiling at them and they smile back.
- When I hear music I love, I know I can't carry a tune and don't have much rhythm so I sit self consciously and listen.
- My kids feel the beat and move to it. They sing out the words. If they don't know them, they make up their own.
- When I feel wind on my face, I brace myself against it. I feel it messing up my hair and pulling me back when I walk.
- My kids close their eyes, spread their arms and fly with it until they fall to the ground laughing.
- When I pray I say Thee and Thou and grant me this, give me that.
- My kids say, "Hi God!!! Thanks for my toys and my friends. Please keep the bad dreams away tonight. Sorry, I don't want to go to Heaven yet. I would miss my Mommy and Daddy."
- When I see a mud puddle, I step around it. I see muddy shoes and clothes and dirty carpets.
- My kids sit in it. They see dams to build, rivers to cross and worms to play with.
- I wonder if we are given kids to teach or to learn from?
- ~~ Author Unknown ~~

Resources



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Resources



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Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefe/>

Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities <http://www.cdc.gov/actearly>

